

Should we be dealing with the larger question, the runaway entitlements, the lack of money to adequately fund NIH or scientific research or education but we cannot because our budget is totally out of control? Should we be doing this? Absolutely. That is what we are here for. We have talked about this for the last 5 years since I have been back here. Despite the many alternatives that have been presented to the White House, every one has been rejected.

So at least let's do those things where we have more control through the appropriations process and better manage government, make it more efficient and make it more effective. That is why we point out these and we will continue to point out these in the "Waste of the Week" No. 10. I cannot wait to get down here next week and do No. 11.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COATS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

STATING THE POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES REGARDING THE RELEASE OF UNITED STATES CITIZENS IN IRAN

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of S. Con. Res. 16, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 16) stating the policy of the United States regarding the release of United States citizens in Iran.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 30 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form prior to a vote on adoption of S. Con. Res. 16.

The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I first want to thank Senator RISCH for his tireless dedication to the plight of the three American citizens unjustifiably detained in Iran, as well as his efforts to call upon the Iranian Government to cooperate in locating Robert Livingston, a missing fourth American, and also returning him to his family.

I also want to thank my colleagues from the States these Americans are from—Senators FEINSTEIN and BOXER from California, Senators STABENOW and PETERS from Michigan, Senators NELSON and RUBIO from Florida, and

Senators CRAPO and RISCH from Idaho—for their efforts in working with the families of these American citizens who have been held too long in Iran.

I call upon the government of Iran to do the right thing—do the right thing and immediately release these citizens and send them home to their families and communities as soon as possible. The resolution has a statement of policy that is absolutely unobjectionable in any way.

Let me point out one last thing, if I might. As the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I want to reassure the families of these Americans that I will continue to urge the U.S. Government to use every tool at its disposal to secure the release of these Americans, and I will continue to call upon the Iranian Government to immediately and unconditionally release these men and send them home to their families.

I am very pleased we will soon be voting on this resolution, which unequivocally says that America should use all the tools at its disposal for the return of these Americans.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that during the quorum call, the time be equally divided between the majority and the minority.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CARDIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I commend Senator RISCH, and I am pleased to be a cosponsor of this resolution, which is incredibly important to people in Michigan as well as across the country.

We have a very special man who unfortunately is being held as a hostage in Iran, and he needs to come home now. I have had the honor of getting to know the family of Amir Hekmati. He is a patriotic American from Flint, MI, who served his country honorably and bravely as a marine between 2001 to 2005 in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is an American citizen but also became a dual citizen with Iran in order to be able to visit his grandmother and other family members in Iran.

In August 2011, he was visiting his grandmother and was arrested by the

Iranian authorities and charged with spying for the CIA, which was absolutely false, absolutely trumped-up charges. He was then deprived of a fair trial and jailed on those totally trumped-up charges.

Of those Americans confirmed as prisoners in Iran, none have been incarcerated longer than Amir Hekmati. He has been waiting the longest to come home. He has been tortured and is locked inside a prison notorious for its deplorable conditions. Meanwhile, Amir's father is battling terminal brain cancer.

I was very honored to have the opportunity to spend time with his family—his mom and dad, his sister and two brothers—who are passionately engaged in speaking out, coming to Washington, meeting with the State Department, and making sure we are laser-focused on their brother and their son. My heart went out to them.

Think about all of us who have children. Speaking to his mom and dad, it is frightening, it is deplorable, it is outrageous, and he needs to come home—now.

I can't say enough about the love and devotion of the Hekmati family. I have had a number of different opportunities to meet with them. Amir's sister and brother have frequently been here in Washington making sure we are not forgetting about this brave marine. They have fought so hard for his freedom.

I also commend Congressman DAN KILDEE, who represents the Hekmati family in Flint, MI, for being a great partner and such a strong advocate and a strong voice on behalf of Amir and his family.

This resolution is a clear message to the Iranian Government: If you want a seat at the table with the rest of the international community, free Amir Hekmati now, as well as all the other U.S. citizens who are being held as hostages.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to all of their families. I can tell this body that for us, in Michigan, we are laser-focused on making sure that Amir Hekmati's name is lifted up at every opportunity and that it is very clear that this brave, courageous marine who served our country so well has the full support of our government to bring him home immediately.

I congratulate and thank my colleague.

I am proud to be one of the cosponsors on this resolution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I thank Senator STABENOW for her work on this resolution and for her actions on behalf of her constituent who is being held in Iran. She has been extremely helpful in bringing this resolution forward.

I see Senator RISCH on the floor. I want to state one last time that because of Senator RISCH, we are on the floor tonight with a vote in the full

Senate. I thank him for his tenacity and persistence on bringing this resolution forward so we can focus this on the four Americans being held by Iran and our desire to get them home as soon as possible and use every tool we have at our disposal on behalf of those Americans.

Mr. President, I thank Senator RISCH for his leadership.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, in addition to thanking Senator RISCH for his tenacity and making sure we are at this point with this resolution, I must also go back to our vote last week and the incredible work of our two colleagues in a bipartisan way, as we saw Senator CORKER and Senator CARDIN come together and lead us forward with a very thoughtful piece of legislation that makes clear the role of the Senate in a very important process right now in negotiations.

I thank Senator CARDIN as the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee for his leadership.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to add Senators PORTMAN, ROBERTS, KIRK, BOOZMAN, SASSE, and ROUNDS as cosponsors to S. Con. Res. 16.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues for those kind words. I think "tenacity" is probably an appropriate description. I would like to have had a little more tenaciousness if it would have resulted in better and stronger language than we have. Nonetheless, we have what we have.

I congratulate Senator CARDIN and Senator CORKER for their hard work on the resolution that passed here last week, which went out of here with only one dissenting vote. It was a difficult process, to say the least. Obviously, it didn't rise to the level that a lot of us wanted to see where this—it could have and should have been handled like a treaty. Indeed, it is a treaty. No matter what else we call it, it is a treaty. Nonetheless, we are where we are. We are better off with these things than without. We are going to wait to see how this plays out as the summer unfolds. We have an important June 30 date. Once an agreement is reached, then, of course, we will be on the floor talking and discussing the appropriateness of the agreement.

There are a lot of us who have been critical of how this started and, for that matter, where we are today. In my judgment, this shouldn't have even started. They shouldn't have even sat down at the table until these people were released and/or accounted for. Nonetheless, we are where we are.

There are four people we are talking about in this resolution. Senator STABENOW already referred to one and gave an excellent description of where we are with that individual.

Next, I will talk about the gentleman from California who is also being held. His name is Jason Rezaian. He has been held on unspecified charges since July 2014, denied access to an attorney in violation of Iran's own laws and international norms, for that matter.

Robert Levinson of Florida is a retired FBI agent who was pursuing an investigation in Iran. He was abducted off Kish Island, off the coast of Iran, in March 2007. His whereabouts are unknown. The Iranian Government has repeatedly said they are not holding Levinson, but certainly they should cut loose the information they have, and this resolution requires them to do so.

Lastly, I want to talk about Saeed Abedini. Pastor Abedini is a constituent of mine from Idaho. He is an ordained Christian minister. He has family in Iran. At the time he was arrested, he was in Iran visiting family and in the process of setting up and running an orphanage. He is detained at the present time in Evin Prison, which is considered one of the worst prisons in Iran. He has been held in solitary confinement, physically beaten, denied access to necessary medical treatment as a result of abuse, and was denied access to his lawyer until just before trial.

He had a trial. He was convicted and sentenced to 8 years. And his offense—his offense—was being Christian and pursuing Christianity in a country where this is not permitted. I think it is shocking to most Americans that this could happen in today's age. This is barbarous conduct by a regime that knows no shame. This man should be released from prison and should be released forthwith. He has done absolutely nothing that is a threat to the Iranian people or, in fact, to the Iranian regime—those are two different things we are talking about here. He has done nothing to be a threat to those people, and he should be released.

Iran thinks it elevates its position in the world because it does these kinds of things. It does not. Certainly it shows toughness but a barbarian type of toughness that the world is not impressed with at all.

This is a country which pushes the envelope whenever it can. This country is at the heart of virtually every problem we have in that part of the world. Most importantly, it is one of if not the most prominent promoters of terrorism in the world. Some time ago, this was thought of as a good thing by some of these nations that do not rise to what they should be on the world stage as an important nation. Terrorism was thought of as a way that things could be done.

In recent years, most every country has had it with terrorism. It is no longer something people look at and say, well, yes, there is terrorism, but you need to understand the root causes. That is gone. That is absolutely gone. The other countries in this region have had it with terrorism. Every-

one in the region now is going to feel that as we go forward.

There is hope for Iran. The demographics in that country show there is a real disconnect between the people of that country and the regime that operates that country. Most notably, as a downside for the present regime, is that the demographics show that the vast majority of people who are living in Iran are young people. They have a different view of the world than the regime does. They are a secular people who do not want to be ruled by religious fanatics, which is what they have today. In any event, the world is watching how this is going to unfold.

Now, we have a clear expression—and Senator CARDIN made mention of this. We ran this as a separate document, not as part of the resolution we passed last week. This is a separate document, where we are going to have a clear expression of the nature and the view of what the world thinks of this and the view that the U.S. Senate and the U.S. Congress takes of the conduct that Iran is engaged in. It is a separate view, and I believe it will be very helpful to the notion that this regime in Iran cannot—cannot—continue down the road it is going down. The Iran regime purports to represent its people. What it is doing is not helpful to the Iranian people.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I will yield back all remaining time, with the consent of my colleague from Maryland.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question occurs on agreeing to S. Con. Res. 16.

Mr. CARDIN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 90, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 175 Leg.]

YEAS—90

Alexander	Blumenthal	Burr
Ayotte	Blunt	Cantwell
Baldwin	Boozman	Capito
Barrasso	Boxer	Cardin
Bennet	Brown	Carper

Casey	Heller	Paul
Cassidy	Hirono	Perdue
Coats	Hoeven	Peters
Cochran	Inhofe	Portman
Collins	Isakson	Reed
Coons	Johnson	Reid
Corker	Kaine	Risch
Cornyn	King	Roberts
Cotton	Klobuchar	Rounds
Crapo	Lankford	Sasse
Daines	Leahy	Schatz
Donnelly	Lee	Schumer
Durbin	Manchin	Scott
Enzi	Markey	Sessions
Ernst	McCain	Shaheen
Feinstein	McCaskill	Shelby
Fischer	McConnell	Stabenow
Flake	Menendez	Tester
Franken	Merkley	Tillis
Gardner	Mikulski	Toomey
Gillibrand	Moran	Udall
Grassley	Murkowski	Warner
Hatch	Murphy	Warren
Heinrich	Murray	Whitehouse
Heitkamp	Nelson	Wicker

NOT VOTING—10

Booker	Rubio	Vitter
Cruz	Sanders	Wyden
Graham	Sullivan	
Kirk	Thune	

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 16) was agreed to, as follows:

S. CON. RES. 16

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

SECTION 1. STATEMENT OF POLICY ON RELEASE OF UNITED STATES CITIZENS IN IRAN.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Saeed Abedini of Idaho is a Christian pastor unjustly detained in Iran since 2012 and sentenced to eight years in prison on charges related to his religious beliefs.

(2) Amir Hekmati of Michigan is a former United States Marine unjustly detained in 2011 while visiting his Iranian relatives and sentenced to 10 years in prison for espionage.

(3) Jason Rezaian of California is a Washington Post journalist credentialed by the Government of Iran. He was unjustly detained in 2014 and has been held without a trial.

(4) Robert Levinson of Florida is a former Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) official who disappeared in 2007 in Iran. He is the longest held United States citizen in United States history.

(b) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States that—

(1) the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran should immediately release Saeed Abedini, Amir Hekmati, and Jason Rezaian, and cooperate with the United States Government to locate and return Robert Levinson; and

(2) the United States Government should undertake every effort using every diplomatic tool at its disposal to secure their immediate release.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

USA FREEDOM ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act expires in a matter of weeks. Senator LEE and I have a bipartisan bill, the USA FREE-

DOM Act, that would end the use of section 215 to authorize the bulk collection of Americans' phone records and replace it with a more targeted program. It also would enact other important reforms to bring more accountability and transparency to government surveillance. The Speaker of the House of Representatives is bringing that same bill for a vote in the House on Wednesday.

Last week, some opponents came to the floor to voice their opposition. They claimed that ending this bulk collection program would somehow put our national security at risk and that a bulk collection program like this could somehow have prevented the September 11 attacks. But the facts are not on their side. According to the headline of a recent National Journal story, these opponents of reform have made "dubious claims in defense of NSA surveillance."

I agree these claims are dubious, and I want to set the record straight. I ask unanimous consent that the National Journal story dated May 8, 2015, and an analysis by the Center for Democracy and Technology of similar claims be printed in the RECORD.

One Senator stated on the Senate floor last week, "If this program had existed before 9/11, it is quite possible we would have known that 9/11 hijacker Khalid Al Mihdhar was living in San Diego and was making phone calls to an Al Qaeda safe house in Yemen."

Another seemed to suggest that the bulk collection program would "have prevented 9/11."

When I was chairman in the last Congress, the Senate Judiciary Committee held six hearings to examine revelations about government surveillance activities. At one of those hearings, I asked former counterterrorism official Richard Clarke, who was working in the Bush administration on September 11, whether the NSA bulk collection program would have prevented those attacks. He testified that the government had the information it needed to prevent the attacks but failed to properly share that information among Federal agencies.

Senator Bob Graham, who investigated the September 11th attacks as head of the Senate Intelligence Committee, likewise has said that "there were plenty of opportunities without having to rely on this metadata system for the FBI and intelligence agencies to have located Mihdhar."

The other claim that has been made repeatedly over the past few days is that, as one Senator put it, the bulk collection of Americans' phone records is "very effective at keeping America safe." Another stated that the USA FREEDOM Act would "eliminate the essential intelligence this program collects."

But numerous national security experts also have concluded that the NSA's bulk collection program is not essential to national security. The President's Review Group on Intel-

ligence and Communications Technology, which included two former national security officials, stated:

The information contributed to terrorist investigations by the use of section 215 telephony metadata was not essential to preventing attacks and could readily have been obtained in a timely manner using conventional section 215 orders.

Former Acting CIA Director Michael Morell testified to the Senate Judiciary Committee that the review group's recommendation to end the government's collection of that data and instead allow the government to search phone records held by the telecommunications providers would not add a substantial burden to the government. That is precisely the approach of our bipartisan USA FREEDOM Act.

Last year, the Director of National Intelligence and the Attorney General supported a prior version of the USA FREEDOM Act, which also ended bulk collection under section 215 and replaced it with a more targeted phone records program. The Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence said that our bill "preserve[d] essential Intelligence Community capabilities."

These individuals are not newcomers to the issue of national security. They understand the threats to our Nation. They do not have a political motive. They have the best interests of our Nation and its values in mind when they tell us that we can end the dragnet collection of innocent Americans' phone records and keep our country safe.

The USA FREEDOM Act does not just end NSA's bulk collection program under section 215. It also fills other gaps in our intelligence capabilities. It ensures that the government can quickly obtain business records—including phone records—in emergency situations. It ensures that if a foreign terrorist who poses a serious threat comes into the United States, the government does not have to stop its surveillance while it seeks emergency wiretap authorization from the Attorney General. It ensures that the government need not terminate FISA surveillance on a foreigner who temporarily travels outside the United States. And it ensures that the FBI has the tools it needs to investigate individuals who are facilitating the international proliferation of weapons of mass destruction on behalf of a foreign government or terrorist organization. These provisions were requested by the FBI and by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. They were not part of the bill that was filibustered in the Senate in November.

As a final matter, it is notable that there has been not a single Senate committee hearing on surveillance reform or the expiring provisions in the 5 months of this new Congress under Republican leadership. There has been zero committee consideration on the bill that Senator MCCONNELL has now brought directly to the Senate calendar that would simply extend these